

## DRAWBACKS OF FREE LIBRARIES

The Particular Book You Want Is Always Out and the System of Fines Annoying.

Here is one man's experience of a free circulating library: "I gave my reference and took out my first book. It was good to scan the library list and see the amount of literature I could read free. The second time I wrote, according to the rule, the list of cabalistic figures which index the book, and after nearly a half hour's delay I was told that the one I wanted was 'out.' Then I put down fresh sets of figures and wasted more half hours, but they were all 'out,' until I finally took in desperation a book recommended me by the young woman who disappears for such an age to make the searches. This book proved so uninteresting that I brought it back next day and again went through the figure list business and the half hours of waiting, until I wound up by repeating my previous experience and taking a book by recommendation.

"I threw it aside on reaching home and forgot I had it until a postal warning me of the due of one cent for every day over two weeks in which I had it had now set in. I turned up with it when eight cents were due, took out another I didn't want and forgot it until eleven cents were due, kept up the business of figure lists, waitings, books I didn't call for and fines afterward throughout a year until I might far better have bought straightout the books I wanted, but never got.

"At last one time with a book in my possession I left town. A siege of postals and of visits from a mysterious-looking man kept my servant busy. I had forgotten all about the book, and my friends were indignant over the dunning of this individual. On my return to town I found that my reference had been called upon to pay for the book which I was in the position of having stolen from the library, and that my reputation was in an unpleasant fix. I now pay for my books."

## TORTURING TURTLES.

How the Poor Reptiles Are Deprived of Their Shells.

"I never see any of the pretty articles made out of tortoise shell," said a citizen of Oakland, Cal., recently, "without thinking of the probable torture the poor turtles had been subjected to in order to procure the material for their manufacture. The natives in the West Indies lie in wait for the turtles as they come to the shore to deposit their eggs, then they catch them and turn them over on their backs, so that they are absolutely helpless. The operation of divesting these creatures of their shells is cruel in the extreme. The tortoise shell that we value is merely the scales that cover the bony shield of the turtle. These scales are thirteen in number, and a large turtle will furnish about eight pounds. In order to detach this shell from the living animal (for they don't want to kill them, as in that case they would be exterminated in a few years) they fasten him down, and then put dry leaves and grass under his back, to

which they set fire. The heat causes the scales to separate at the joints. They then insert a large knife beneath them and lift the shell from the back. Many turtles die under the operation, but they have been known to be caught a second time with an outer coating reproduced, but in such cases there was only one piece, instead of thirteen.

## AUSTRALIA'S CLIMATES.

It Has a More Varied Assortment Than Almost Any Other Land.

What is our idea of the Australian climate? It is most probably news to us to be told—perhaps we have never even thought of it—that in one colony of New South Wales, in parts, the inhabitants experience a winter like Canada and a summer like Jamaica. In Kiandra, says All the Year Round, a mining town on the borderland between New South Wales and Victoria, there is no communication with the outside world for four months in the year except by the use of snowshoes. Snowshoe races are organized, and the mail man has to use these means of locomotion.

At the same time in Queensland the sun will be pouring down in overpowering strength, drying all before him and making water dearer than wine. To continue the tale of this diversity of climate, in part of northern Queensland the rainfall and vegetation are not unlike those of Ceylon; in the northern rivers of New South Wales canebrakes flourish as moist and luxuriant as in Jamaica; in the west of the same colony a long file of camels laden with merchandise has become a common object. And in Tasmania Assam hybrid tea plants grow side by side with barley, maize and potatoes.

## Surplus of Lawyers.

In 1850 the proportion of lawyers to the male population in this country was one in 494 and in 1880 it was one in 398. The number of lawyers in legislatures has always been greater than their proportion of the population would warrant. In Maine there has been on the average one lawyer for each ten members; in Vermont and Rhode Island, one for each twelve; in Connecticut and in New Hampshire, one in sixteen, and in Massachusetts, one in nine. Of the entire number of United States senators since 1787, 2,068 out of 3,123 have been lawyers. Of the twenty-four presidents of the United States nineteen have been lawyers. Seventeen of the twenty-three vice presidents and 213 of the 232 cabinet officers have been members of the bar.

## The Fish's Power.

A fish exerts its great propulsive power with its tail, not its fins. The paddle wheel was made on the fin theory of propulsion, and the screw propeller had its origin in noting the action of the tail. It is now shown that the fins of the tail actually perform the evolutions described by the propeller blades, and that the fish in its sinuous motion through the water depends on the torsional action of the tail to give it power.

## HIS FRESH OLIVES.

How a California Planter Amuses Himself at the Expense of Innocent Travelers.

Eastern visitors to California are always much interested in the olive plantations which in recent years have become a feature of the most southerly counties of the state. The lovers of the succulent fruit when pickled and bottled for sale in the east and north are always anxious to taste the olive fresh and ripe. There is a popular impression that it is sweet and delicious, but, like many other popular impressions, this is a delusion and a snare.

A few miles south of San Diego, says the New York Herald, where the railroad makes a junction with a small one track road leading into Mexico, a large planter has taken advantage of this delusion for his own amusement. On the arrival of each train from the north numerous travelers dismount to await the starting of the train across the Mexican border. For their benefit the planter has nailed a box outside of his fence just across the way from the railroad station which he keeps filled with nice, ripe olives. A placard invites victims in these words:

FINE, FRESH, RIPE OLIVES,  
FREE  
HELP YOURSELF.

Of course there is a rush from the station as soon as the box and its contents are discovered, and swarms of innocents seize the pretty fruit and dig their teeth into it. Then there is a combined howl and a great deal of expectation and disgust, for the delusive fruit are nearly as puckery as persimmons.

And the planter? Oh, he takes his fun from a partly hidden summer house within his grounds, where he occasionally seats himself to enjoy the spectacle. It is a sure cure for the blues, he says.

## JAPAN JOTTINGS.

FOLDING fans were invented in Japan, and were suggested by the way in which a bat closes its wings.

FUDGE-TAIL fish, which are cultivated in Japan, sell for one hundred dollars apiece. Many such fish are found in the aquariums of wealthy New York families.

In Japan dwelling houses are made air-tight at night. It is a violation of the police ordinance to make an opening in any part of the building that would let in a supply of fresh air.

Tests were recently made on a Japan railway to decide as to the hauling power of American and English locomotives. The result showed the superiority of the American machines, and hereafter they are to be preferred.

THE blackbird and the cuckoo are the only known birds that never build nests.

THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY mountains in the United States are over 10,000 feet high.

AFTER being abolished for twenty-five years the death penalty has been resumed in Switzerland.